

# Lies Of Our Times

JULY 1990

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German  
Reunification  
Close Up

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Bulgaria and  
Cuba Revisited

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The *Times*,  
the Cold War,  
and the Nazis

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Chomsky,  
Cockburn,  
and More

The New European Order

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**Cover:** The *Times* headline to Henry Kamm's June 26 story (p. A6) said it all: "East Falls Under Spell of West German Mark." Credit: Reuters/Bettmann.

## Those Tricky Commies

Nearly every day for some years now, the *New York Times* has carried a medium length, human interest piece from some esoteric spot around the globe. The item, a "journal" from the town or city of the day, usually appears on page four.

Despite their travelogue-like nature, the journals are — as everything else — politically charged. A good example is the June 15 "Karlovy Vary Journal," by Steven Greenhouse.

Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia, has been a famous spa for six hundred years. There are numerous hotels and hot baths there, some of them quite ancient. Greenhouse discusses the changes which ensued when the communist government came to power after World War II. He likens the postwar government to "a cold, gray shower for this town of warm springs ... forcing it to shun its glorious bourgeois past." What happened, he says, is that "this enchanting town ... became the resort of choice for poor Soviet workers..." He quotes the manager of the famous, 289-year-old Grand Hotel Pupp: "We've gone from being a spa for the rich to one for people on social security."

Up to this point, with the exception of the use of the word "glorious" — which might well be irony — Greenhouse has not intruded his politics into the story. We do not yet know if he thinks it is good or bad that poor people have the opportunity for nice vacations just like rich people.

But he lets us know quickly enough. His first sentence after quoting the manager's complaint is: "That was not the only trick that communism played on this town of 60,000."

The other trick, in case you are holding your breath, was that the name of the Hotel Pupp had been changed to the "reveiled" Hotel Moskva, and under that new name, "the queen of spas aged rapidly." Just to show how clever the new regime is, they have changed it back to Hotel Pupp.

— Ellen Ray and William H. Schaap

## Lies Of Our Times

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## To Our Readers

*Lies Of Our Times* is a magazine of media criticism. "Our Times" are the times we live in but also the words of the *New York Times*, the most cited news medium in the U.S., our paper of record. Our "Lies" are more than literal falsehoods; they encompass subjects that have been ignored, hypocrisies, misleading emphases, and hidden premises — the biases which systematically shape reporting. We can address only a sampling of the universe of media lies and distortions. But, we hope *LOOT* will go a long way toward correcting the record.

# East European and Global Realities

Victor Wallis

It cannot be denied that the *New York Times's* coverage of Eastern Europe has been prodigious, even to the extent of including some articles that show the downside of recent trends (e.g., the story headlined "Jobless to Soar in a Free-Market East, C.I.A. Says," May 17, 1990, p. A12).

Despite the merits of this coverage, however, it also raises serious questions in regard to any larger understanding of the state of the world. Past experience leads us to suspect that whenever the *Times* gives disproportionate attention to a particular process in one country or region, there are other countries or regions undergoing comparable processes that are being slighted. The inattention to the latter set of countries sheds light on the attention that the *Times* is giving to the former.

There are two principal aspects to what the *Times* treats daily under the caption "Evolution in Europe." One is the replacement of nonelective by elective political regimes; the other is the breakdown of a particular set of economic institutions and the process of replacing it by another. The *Times*, along with the rest of the U.S. mass media and the country's political leaders, tends to lump both processes together, thereby suggesting an equation between the introduction of democratic institutions and the restoration of capitalism. This view is encapsulated in the title chosen for the *Times's* collected news stories on the past year's changes: *The Collapse of Communism*.

## It is not only in Eastern Europe that elective governments are replacing nonelective ones.

But it is not only in Eastern Europe that elective governments are replacing nonelective ones; nor is it only in Eastern Europe that existing economic institutions are proving dramatically incapable of responding to popular needs. While the *Times* provides information about both these processes in other parts of the world, the coverage is much less sustained. Sporadic articles take the place of a daily feature-section, and the question of any systemic significance to the developments is not even raised.

Imagine the *Times* replacing this erratic treatment — focused mainly on the most immediate aspects of governmental change — with a daily section entitled "Evolution in the Third World," bringing together accounts of hunger, debt, environmental devastation, and political repression, with an eventual collection of reports published as *The Breakdown of Capitalism*. Improbable? That would be an understatement. Implausible?

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Not if we were to apply similar criteria of relevance to those that the *Times* applies in its treatment of Eastern Europe.

Let us consider first the changeover from nonelective to elective governments. *LOOT* has already provided a thorough analysis of the *Times's* treatment of such a prospect in South Africa, showing how the *Times*, in its choice of language, systematically refrains from extending to South Africa the political criterion for citizenship (i.e., one person, one vote) that is taken for granted in noncolonial settings. But this is only the most blatant example of a more pervasive practice, involving the *Times's* shifting guidelines as to what makes for a genuinely elective regime in the first place.

## Contrasting Elections

In 1984, one could cite the contrast between the Nicaraguan elections, which, despite widespread international recognition, did not meet the *Times's* requirements, and the Salvadoran elections, which did — even though the Salvadoran regime had committed far more serious violations of the kinds of electoral ground rules that the *Times* itself stressed in the case of Nicaragua (e.g., guarantees to opposition press and organizations). A similar contrast is coming into view at the present moment with regard to the *Times's* treatment of the Romanian and Bulgarian elections on the one hand and the elections of last December in Chile and Brazil on the other. While much of the necessary information on all these cases has yet to emerge, the *Times's* predispositions are already clear.

In the case of the East European countries, it is taken for granted that if forces from a renamed or reconstituted Communist party are successful, the election must have been somehow tainted. Even without charging fraud, the *Times* attributes a distorting role, in these countries, to such factors as the continued public activity of secret police personnel (editorial, "Romania's Halfway House," May 26, 1990, p. 22). It would seem, according to the *Times*, that a credible transition to democracy requires the complete incapacitation of all forces or interests identifiable with the previous regime.

Whatever the merits of such a view, the *Times* has certainly not been willing to extend it to Chile and Brazil. Consider applying to a current East European regime the following present-day characteristics of Chile: 1) the previous dictator remains commander-in-chief of the army; 2) dozens of the old regime's political prisoners remain incarcerated; 3) prosecutions for human rights violations under the old regime are not expected; and 4) the basic economic policy of that regime is to be continued. There can be little question as to what the *Times* would conclude from all this in an East European or a socialist setting. But in Chile, it adds up to a happily restored democracy.

In the case of Brazil, where the restoration of civilian rule has been in process for several years (though with no direct presidential election from the time of the 1964 military coup until 1989), the *Times's* limited attention is perhaps even more striking. While the issues connected with the former military regime have receded (in comparison with Chile), the economic hardships of the majority have become particularly acute, and the negative ecological impact of the country's "growth model" has become a matter of global concern. Neither problem has been alleviated by the switch from military to civilian rule. What *has*

come to challenge the established priorities has been the rapid growth of the Workers' Party, whose presidential candidate, Luis Inacio da Silva ("Lula"), came within a few percentage points of winning the 1989 election. Once the election was over, however, the Workers' Party virtually disappeared from the *Times's* coverage.

The continuing trauma of Brazil's economic plight leads us back to the second major object of attention in the *Times's* "Evolution in Europe" pages. In dealing with the economic problems of Eastern Europe, the *Times* seems to have no trouble speaking of "radical" solutions as embodying a serious and practical response to the issues at hand. A "radical" position in that context is one that differs from others in its advocacy of a faster and more complete restoration of capitalist markets.

Wide World Photos



Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula), center, at election rally, December, 1989.

Whatever one might think of this approach as a response to those countries' problems, it is an understandable reaction to decades of misrule in the name of socialism.

### A Logical Double Standard

Again, however, what is most revealing about the *Times's* presentation of this approach is its failure to comprehend a similar logic when the culprit is not a corrupt and repressive planning system but rather the corrupt and repressive operation of the free market itself. This is why the Third World examples are so pertinent. Where, in the *Times's* coverage of Brazil, can one find the kind of "person-in-the-street" complaints about economic hardship that one finds in the stories on Eastern Europe? Economic failure in Brazil, for the *Times*, is a problem for the financial pages; it is generally not a human-interest story. Radical responses among Brazilians go against the free market rather than in its favor, but since they come from people with whom we are not given a chance to empathize, they have the appearance of being "ideologically inspired" rather than being the reaction you or I might have to an intolerable situation.

In its reporting on Eastern Europe, the *Times* has momentarily betrayed its Olympian posture in order to identify wholeheartedly with popular outrage. But the occasion for its doing so remains a peculiar one. For liberation to be broadly identified with capitalist institutions is, at the present stage of history, a fluke. Chile and Brazil remind us most forcefully of this, but the *Times* prefers to divert our attention. ●

# Alfred Herrhausen: Terrorist Victim?

Michael D. Morrissey

**T**he murder of Alfred Herrhausen, chairman of West Germany's Deutsche Bank, on November 30, 1989, has been treated as an open-and-shut case by the media on both sides of the Atlantic: The Red Army Faction (RAF) did it.

It is difficult to question this foregone conclusion without seeming to defend a terrorist group which has been the German Public Enemy Number One for 16 years. But the evidence is thin, consisting primarily of a note of confession found at the scene of the bombing, along with a letter written a month before by an imprisoned RAF leader and intercepted by German authorities. According to *Der Spiegel* (December 4, 1989), it says, "We must orient ourselves to a new phase of the struggle" and "strike at the mechanism which makes everything work."

As head of the biggest German bank, Herrhausen was certainly a key figure in the "mechanism," and after the opening of the border on November 9, and of Eastern Europe in general, he was in a particularly powerful position to influence these massive changes. Shortly before his death, he announced Deutsche Bank's purchase of the British investment bank Morgan Grenfell for 2.7 billion marks, which *Spiegel* calls "the most important strategic decision of the Deutsche Bank since World War II," giving them a bridgehead in London, still the most important European center for international banking.

Herrhausen was not only powerful, he was perhaps the most progressive banker around. He had ideas which were sensible and realistic, but much too radical for some. Furthermore, he was charismatic— attractive, articulate, and outspoken— all of which adds up to a man who could have made a difference. Such men, for darker minds, are dangerous. We Americans know what happens to charismatic harbingers of change—they get shot. According to the "lone nut" theory of history (which began with the Warren Report), all of this violence is "senseless," but most of us know by now that the world makes more sense than the mass media would have us believe.

*Spiegel* is not the worst German newsweekly (there is considerable competition), but it is not surprising to find the most important aspect of the 10-page story buried on the ninth page:

Some of the things Herrhausen said and did do not fit in the simple leftist image of the ugly capitalist enemy. For example, he was the first prominent western banker to propose publicly, two years ago, that the debt crisis in the Third World could not be solved without a partial waiver of claims by the western creditor banks. This was also clear at the time to most other heads of banks, but they would have preferred to keep it to themselves a while longer.

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Herrhausen supported the strategy of debt reduction, as opposed to refinancing (“fresh money”), strongly and consistently. His detailed proposal was published in the German financial newspaper *Handelsblatt* on June 6, 1989, and repeated in a presentation to the annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington on September 25, 1989. In the latter he remarked: “Mr. Reed, speaking for Citibank, has said they are a ‘new money’ bank. I can tell you that the Deutsche Bank is a ‘debt reduction’ bank.” In the same speech, he pointed out that a major obstacle to his proposed debt reduction strategy is that Japanese and American banks would find it more difficult than their European counterparts to compensate partially for their losses through tax adjustments.

The *New York Times*, December 8, 1989, printed portions of a speech which Herrhausen was to have given in New York on December 4 at the American Council on Germany. The entire speech was published in German on the same day in *Die Zeit*. The comparison is revealing.

The original manuscript is in English (a complete copy of which I obtained from the Deutsche Bank), and the title is “New Horizons in Europe.” The *Times* excerpt, about half the original, is entitled “Toward a Unified Germany,” which grossly misrepresents the thrust of the speech. It is clear to anyone who reads even what the *Times* printed that Herrhausen was not pleading for unification. In fact, he was refreshingly cautious on this point, in contrast to the increasingly strident media campaign Germans East and West have been subjected to in the past few months. He said that if the East Germans decide to join the West, fine, but “at this point, the question is still very much an open question. [This sentence was omitted in the *Times*.] Secondly, such an endeavor would be a difficult and certainly a long process in view of the large economic and social differences that exist today.”

### **Herrhausen was perhaps the most progressive banker around. He strongly supported the strategy of debt reduction.**

Although Henry Kissinger appeared on German television at around the same time predicting unification within five years, Herrhausen was figuring on about ten years. The following paragraph, although it comes in the middle of a portion printed by the *Times*, was omitted:

Of course, the process [of transforming a socialist society into a capitalistic one] could and should be managed in stages and it should be closely coordinated with price and currency reform. Price, currency and property reform would mean profound changes throughout society in Eastern Germany. Many people in the East, including some of the leaders of the present opposition groups, are already worried about the social costs of such adjustment. The rewards would certainly not accrue instantaneously. However, I am convinced that, given an adequate economic environment in the



Alfred Herrhausen

East and pertinent support by the West, the East German as well as the other Eastern economies could achieve impressive growth. I believe the GDR in particular could then catch up on the western standard of living in about ten years or so.

Most importantly, the *Times* excerpt completely omitted Herrhausen’s discussion of the same proposals for debt reduction and in-country development banks which he had made to the World Bank and IMF in September. These proposals, coming from a man in his position, were surely the most newsworthy items in the speech. Why did the *Times* find them unfit to print? Herrhausen refers here to Poland, but the same could apply to other highly indebted countries:

In the past, the banks have agreed to regular reschedulings, but now the onus is on government lenders assembled in the Paris Club [a committee representing creditor nations that meets in Paris to deal with debt problems of individual countries] to come up with a helpful contribution. They account for roughly two-thirds of the country’s external debt. If there is to be a permanent solution, this will require enlarging the strategies hitherto adopted to include a reduction of debt or debt service.

As an alternative to the European Development Bank proposed by France, Herrhausen proposed the establishment of a development bank in Warsaw “to bundle incoming aid and deploy it in accordance with strict efficiency criteria.” Such an “Institute for Economic Renewal,” as he called it, would help channel western aid and monitor its efficient use. “The Institute,” he said, “could play a constructive role in economic reform. Similar institutions could, of course, be established for other countries.”

These are eminently reasonable ideas, but it is not difficult to imagine that they would encounter powerful opposition. No matter how you put it, for the creditors debt reduction means giving away money. And of course it makes sense to put the lending bank “on the spot,” since this would keep the repaid capital and interest in the country where it is needed. This is not the way the big international banks make money, however.

Alfred Herrhausen may have been a terrorist victim, as the media seem determined to have us believe (and now forget). The question is, who are the terrorists? ●

# East Germany Report: It's Who You Know

Dave Lindorff

These are heady days for American journalism in Eastern Europe. Communism has essentially collapsed in many of the nations of the Warsaw Pact, and as conservative governments have taken over the reigns of power in countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary, the borders have been opened wide for capitalist investment from the West.

The American media cannot seem to control their breathless excitement long enough to realize that people in these new "free-market" societies, only months into the experiment, are anxious, afraid, and seriously threatened. They are not all going to become capitalist tycoons.

## Vast Unemployment Expected

East Germany is a case in point.

After writing about little but the foreign policy aspects of German reunification for months, on June 12 the *New York Times* finally offered a front-page story on the impact of the economic union between East and West Germany which is to take place July 1. That "union," actually a euphemism for the takeover by the West German Deutschmark and the West German Bundesbank of East Germany's economy, is likely to toss 50 percent or more of East Germany's work force out of their jobs, raise prices overnight to West German levels, destroy East German communal agriculture, and produce a return to the streets on a scale not seen since last November, when the Communist regime was ousted.

But what did the *Times* tell us, when its Germany correspondent Serge Schmemmann finally got around to reporting on East German attitudes towards the Bundesbank's *anschluss*? Headlined "Germans' Currency Union: A Fantasy Becoming Reality," his story basically suggested that while people were anxious, they were ready to weather the storm. After quoting at the end of his piece a budding capitalist fruit vendor who said, "Now that there's so much competition, it's much calmer," Schmemmann concluded, "It sounded almost a slogan for currency union."

It is hard to see how the term "calm" can be seriously applied to a process that is about to bankrupt half the economy of a nation, almost overnight.

Schmemmann's rose-colored reportage is particularly curious, since less than a month earlier (May 17, p. A12) the *Times* ran a story by his colleague Robert Pear in Washington, citing a congressionally ordered CIA study which predicted East German unemployment would "soar" in a free-market East to 15 to 20 percent. Pear quoted Sen. Jeff Bingaman (Dem.-N.M.) saying

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Sign on a shoe factory in East Berlin: "What is going to happen to us after July 2?"

"there is simply no time to be euphoric." Schmemmann seems not to have paid much attention to that piece.

## Workers Never Interviewed

Part of the problem is that, as generally happens in *Times* foreign reporting, the reporter did not ever talk to working class people—the ones in this case who stand to lose their jobs with little hope of another for years to come. In his lengthy piece, Schmemmann interviewed the fruit vendor, the director of a savings bank, a student who was working at a summer job for a West German sex-shop catalogue company, two factory administrators, a shoe company spokeswoman, a West German consultant, a store director, and a small city mayor. Even though he mentioned that the largest employer in Weissenfels, the town where he based his reporting, was planning to lay off more than a quarter of its workforce in July, Schmemmann appeared not to have bothered to get an interview with one of the soon-to-be-dropped workers. The only hint that he may have talked to sources other than executives or budding capitalists was a vague, shoddy reference to "most folks," who Schmemmann claimed "seem to agree [with the fruit vendor] that there will probably not be a big shopping spree" on July 2. Who were those folks and how many were they? He did not say.

The irony is that many of the sanguine executive-level people Schmemmann chose to interview were probably former party hacks, since one of the bitter facts about the East German "revolution" has been that, as in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, the old East German Communist managerial elite has been left in place to run the new "free market" enterprises. Indeed, the only place I saw Mercedes and BMW cars with East German plates was in a posh Hohenschonhausen neighborhood which an East German friend explained to me was "all Stasi" (State Security) officials.

One of those party hacks, the manager of the October 7 Machine Tool Kombinat, was the focus of a June 24 lead story in the *Sunday Times* Business Section (p. F1) by reporter Steven Greenhouse. Unlike Schmemmann, Greenhouse noted the manager's prerevolutionary background. Greenhouse also made mention of the massive unemployment ahead for East Germany, though he too did not bother to talk to any of the 7,000 workers he said the concern was laying off effective July 2, to

find out what they thought of the whole free market process.

### The Workers Tell Their Story

In my own week in Germany, I spoke with teachers, construction workers, bus drivers, government clerks, factory workers, and store clerks. What I heard was another story altogether. There was by mid-May a widespread sense of having been tricked in March by West German promises, particularly by promises made by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (who campaigned heavily for the victorious East German Christian Democratic Party). There was a sense of desperation about the future. A number of people told me, in similar words, that they were so depressed at the cavalier way decisions about their future were being made in Bonn that they wanted "to put the wall back up." Many also said that they had made a mistake voting for the Christian Democrats in March, and that the Communists would have done a better job of bargaining for them on the terms of unification. (In fact, the Communists, now called the Party of Democratic Socialism, actually have done pretty well in democratic elections—a fact that the *Times* and most of the major U.S. media have ignored. The PDS is the largest single opposition party, with a fifth of the seats, in the East German parliament, and in May's local elections, it was the top votegetter in five of East Berlin's 11 districts and in a number of major cities outside Berlin.)

Schmemann could have mentioned the many East German cars that carry a little oval "D" on the back of the trunk (for "Deutschland"), but with a bright yellow banana on top of it (symbolizing "banana republic" status). He could have reported on the continuing string of demonstrations against the course of currency union by teachers, workers, women's groups, and farmers. He could, if he only felt comfortable talking with the bourgeoisie and officials, have at least interviewed the East German Minister of Labor, Regine Hildebrandt, who has warned of massive unrest and a "desperate situation" ahead for East German workers.

### The Specter of Capitalism

The *Wall Street Journal's* Frederick Kempe, writing a page-one story on June 14, got it better. Headlined "After the Euphoria: Specter of Capitalism Haunts East Germans Used to Certainties," his story spoke of "individual panic" and of long-term unemployment that may go as high as 50 percent of the workforce. He captured the widespread sense of something lost in an interview with an electrical engineer who told him, "We have lost our old system of values, however flawed it might have been, but we don't have a new system of values. Everyone is only thinking of himself at the moment. We have lost the dream of building any new society, and now we only want to survive."

Even Kempe failed to include any interviews with blue-collar workers in his story, but at least he captured the sense of panic and disappointment that, for a reporter in East Germany these days, *should* be hard to miss.

*Times* readers, no doubt, will react in surprise when August and September bring them stories of massive anti-government demonstrations in Berlin. The information was there all along, but *Times* editors seem satisfied if their Eastern European reporters stick to the better classes for their interviews. ●

William Preston, Jr.

## Down the Memory Hole

### The U.S., Nazis, and the U.N.: Media Bias in the Cold War

As World War II drew to a close in 1945, the winners proposed two diverse organizations to recreate freedom, order, and security in its aftermath: the national security state, with its vast intelligence agency components, and the United Nations, with its similarly vast substructures of applied benevolence. Both would be defined by the quality of their leadership and personnel as well as by their ostensible mandates to prevent war and promote peace. And their formative years would undoubtedly instill habits of behavior that would survive long into the future.

The United States had the power to set a noble example, and its claim to have the most vigorous press freedom in history suggested that media coverage of these momentous events would be timely and complete. It was not to be, as two recent investigations of those hopeful, yet ultimately tragic years reveal.

#### Recent Investigations

Christopher Simpson's *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988) and Shirley Hazzard's *Countenance of Truth: The United Nations and the Waldheim Case* (New York: Viking, 1990) describe and clarify the political warfare practices and consequences of those early postwar years. Simpson shows how the United States recruited Nazis, ex-Nazis, and fascist collaborators from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, many of whom were war criminals, to serve as intelligence analysts, spies, covert operations specialists, guerrilla warfare candidates, and assassination experts, all in the name of anticommunism. Others became relief and refugee leaders, heads of émigré organizations, speakers and publicists, members of various CIA front groups, and propaganda broadcasters for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Many were brought surreptitiously past U.S. immigration barriers to become influential political forces within rightwing émigré communities in the United States. What Simpson outlines was not the de-Nazification of Europe, but the Nazification of significant elements of the American intelligence apparatus and its political allies, which was to corrupt the domestic politics and foreign policies of the U.S. for years to come.

At the same time, as Hazzard shows, the U.S. government forced political screening into the personnel process at the United Nations. Cemented in a secret State Department pact with Secretary-General Trygve Lie and further stimulated by internal security hearings that attacked American staff members, this subversion of internationalism decimated morale within the U.N. system and atrophied its freedom from governmental control almost from birth.

Anticommunism and national self-interest thus produced



Campaign billboard in Austria describing Kurt Waldheim as "The Federal President We Need Now," defaced with swastikas.

their sinister, diabolical impact on world affairs in two crucial instruments of potential influence: the realm of national covert operations and the arena of international cooperation. In the former, loyalty, security, and past politics meant nothing at all. Even war criminals were welcome. In the latter, the techniques of political surveillance and investigation made those with moral vision, imagination, and independent judgment suspect. Even the best people were unwelcome.

### The Media Complicity

Surely these decisive developments should have spurred some critical investigative journalism. But that did not occur. It is particularly shocking in the case of the CIA's psychological warfare operations and illegal domestic propaganda campaigns, as those set the terms for the nation's political debate and defined the nature of its foreign policies toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, a framework that came dangerously close to igniting a nuclear war of mutual extinction.

In brief, Christopher Simpson's historical analysis establishes the following significant patterns of deceit. From the very beginning, "a powerful lobby inside the American media" — including the leaders of *Time/Life*, CBS, and the *Reader's Digest* — agreed to suppress all news of the government's massive psychological warfare campaign and the true depth of its Nazi and fascist connections. As a result, through a variety of projects, the CIA secretly became "the largest single political advertiser on the American scene," to "scare" the people of the United States so they would believe the Cold War myths. This pact included suppressing all critical news about the CIA's role and purpose; circulating falsified reports and bogus history about the backgrounds of exile and émigré spokesmen — presenting them as "freedom fighters" or patriotic, heroic anticommunists; publicizing forged Nazi documents of supposed Soviet atrocities; concealing the CIA funding of media assets at a cost of about a billion dollars a year during the 1950s; and featuring hundreds of favorable news stories about numerous CIA front organizations without questioning their personnel or their possible bias.

As Simpson notes, a Nazi-formulated philosophy of anti-communism entrenched itself as an intelligence ideology among the victors. Because it "metastasized through the government at an extraordinary rate" and remained unchecked by any critical investigative journalistic exposé, it created the political tenor mistakenly called McCarthyism. The media contributed to "an unrelentingly hostile effort to 'roll back communism' in Eastern Europe, an effort that eventually consumed millions of dollars, thousands of lives, and considerable national prestige."

The rollback of internationalism proceeded simultaneously, and with similar media uninterest. According to Shirley Hazzard, Trygve Lie's once covert arrangement with the U.S. government received only "brief press attention," and its significance for the subversion of a powerful, independent U.N. presence in world affairs stimulated almost no "outrage ... in the American press." Nor did the institution of political screening, resulting in "tens of thousands of useless and defamatory files," ever generate media reporting on the subsequent decline of the U.N. and its passive subordination to nationalistic self-interests. Rather the Secretariat's defensive definition of the organization's importance ("just existing is perhaps the most important quality") tended to go "unchallenged by the media." The role of the U.S. in disrupting and dominating the U.N. by attacking its civil service remained unexplored and unremembered.

Richard Hoggart's history of UNESCO, *An Idea and Its Servants: UNESCO From Within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), described the U.S. clearance system at the U.N. as its "most inglorious procedure" and "the greatest obstacle to the emergence of a secure and true international service." In commenting on this work in the *New York Times*, Paul Lewis made no reference to Hoggart's assault on the U.S. clearance system, tracing the "politicization" of UNESCO to the Soviet and Third World entry in the 1970s (December 30, 1983, p. A4).

### The Waldheim Case

In December 1971 these two postwar trends of covert duplicity and media misinformation combined in an unforgettable final irony when Kurt Waldheim became the fourth Secretary-General of the U.N. Like so many others before him, Waldheim had probably become a U.S. intelligence asset in 1945 (although his file remains inaccessible). By 1971, his curious cover story of self-de-Nazification could have been exposed by several governments or by any determined investigator in the Central Registry of War Criminals, data "publicly available to American archives since the late nineteen-sixties." Yet, according to Hazzard, "Waldheim evidently also knew that his candidacy would not result in exposure."

With a chorus of acclamation from the press and "a coincidence of negligence" on his behalf "among numerous government agencies around the world," a war criminal from Austria began his decade of leadership at the U.N. In doing so, Waldheim symbolized and united the covert recruitment of Nazis on behalf of anticommunism and the grim dismemberment of international ideals embodied in the elimination of merit at the U.N. The ready acceptance and conspicuous silence of the American media conspired to transform these ugly realities into the mythical preconceptions of the Cold War national security state. ●



# Lithuanians and Letts Do It

Phillip Bonosky

**W**hen the Lithuanian situation first captured headlines last year, it caught the journalistic Rough Riders of the Cold War by surprise. As far as most of them were aware, "captive" Lithuania was where Cole Porter left it in the famous song from his 1928 Broadway musical, *Paris*: "Lithuanians and Letts do it." That is, if these exotic people from Lithuania and Latvia could do it — could fall in love — so could anyone.

Still, it was remarkable how quickly the journalists recovered. I had witnessed this before, on a plane to Kabul, when these same nimble-footed scribes could be seen poring over a crinkly new map and asking each other anxiously just where Afghanistan was. But that very evening, briefed at the U.S. Embassy before they had even toured the town, they were sending their authoritative reports back home.

It did not take long for the *New York Times* crew in Moscow to get oriented. Most had never been to Lithuania, or, if they had, only for a flying visit to see the museum of devils in Kaunas. But by the end of the day, with Bill Keller leading the pack, they had the names of all the leading players spelled right — and tagged.

It was downright remarkable that these U.S. correspondents managed to reach instant agreement on how to view key issues. Indeed, the very fact that dozens of them were congregated in Vilnius generated an impetus to force events, to *create* a crisis atmosphere, which could be exploited for purely journalistic purposes. It was like William Randolph Hearst's classic order to his man in Havana in 1897: "You supply the pictures; I'll furnish the war."

But furnishing the pictures was not easy in this case. There was no battleship *Maine* to be blown up. Gorbachev perversely persisted in using peaceful means to persuade his opponents. Nor was it possible to cast President Vytautas Landsbergis, the leader of the nationalist organization Sajudis, as a modern-day David. He was certainly no Nelson Mandela, nor even a Daniel Ortega, let alone a Lech Walesa. In his ambition to bring back nationalism in order to destroy socialism, Landsbergis stirred up unlovely memories of the earlier (1926-1940) nationalist regime of Antanas Smetona with its vicious anti-Semitism, mass jailings, outlawing of unions, and introduction of the first gas chambers in Europe as a means of executing dissidents. Most of this history was absent from U.S. media coverage.

Other acts flawed the picture. Not only had the decision to opt for "independence" been taken in a few hours in an atmosphere of nationalist jingoism, but laws were hastily passed by the Sajudis majority outlawing opposition papers and, among

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Wide World Photos



Antanas Smetona in exile in the U.S., to which he fled, via Nazi Germany, when his fascist government fell to the Soviets in 1940. Here, two months before Pearl Harbor, he sits in his summer cabin.

other repressive measures, casting non-Lithuanian minorities into the outer darkness of citizenship-by-sufferance. Back came the nationalist anthem and the flag earlier associated with utterly reactionary proto-fascist regimes.

It did not add up to a good image. Nobody was more aware of this than William Safire of the *New York Times*. When the Soviets cut down on the low-priced gas piped to Lithuania, causing shortages at the gas stations, Safire reviewed the scene with a stage manager's clucking disapproval. It would not do. In his April 23 column (p. A19) he wrote that in order "to prick the conscience of the world, Lithuanians will have to do more than line up cars at gas stations." There is precious little pathos to be squeezed out of the plight of stalled motorists cursing the gas attendant. Safire felt the picture lacked the broken bodies and bombed hospitals Hearst's formula called for.

Earlier, under the heading "Let Lithuania Go" — perhaps, ironically, to arouse a resonance of "let my people go" — Safire waxed indignant that Gorbachev had ordered Lithuanians to turn in their shotguns (March 23, p. A35). He complained that Gorbachev "rips the shotguns out of the hands of peaceful Lithuanians (thereby inviting the violence leading to a crack-down)." If the *sequitur* seems to be missing here, one should remember that *predicting* an action as "inevitable" is often no more than a device for advocating it.

This particular Safire piece had the subhead, "End the 'Phony War,'" a reference, evidently, to an earlier so-called phony war — the inaction which followed the 1939 Allied declaration of war against Germany. It is problematical whether one can draw a direct connection between this Safire complaint and the seizure in April of 250,000 hunting rifle cartridges on board the *M. Koslov* in Lithuania's Baltic port, Klaipeda. But it is clear that the atmosphere was highly charged, and all such interferences had an effect.

The dispute between Lithuanians and the Soviet government is an internal one and should be solved by the principals involved. It should not be turned into an East-West issue, even to sell Cold War newspapers. ●

# Keeping Propaganda Themes Alive: The Bulgarian Connection

Edward S. Herman

The political changes in Eastern Europe, Mikhail Gorbachev's November 1989 meeting with Pope John Paul II in Rome, and a March 1990 press conference by a Soviet defector have resuscitated the U.S. mass media's charges of Bulgarian-KGB involvement in the 1981 attempted assassination of the Pope.

The media's gullibility in dealing with this issue at the time was astonishing. The alleged Bulgarian connection was enormously helpful to the Reagan administration in its labeling of the Soviet Union as an Evil Empire, and when the claim was put forward by Claire Sterling and the *Reader's Digest* in 1982, the media snapped it up. That the story was based entirely on a confession by a half-crazed Turkish fascist, following 17 months in an Italian prison, and that it was immensely serviceable to Italian and other western political interests, aroused no skepticism in the U.S. press or television. In 1984 the *New York Times* printed byline articles by Claire Sterling even though she not only had a vested interest in the Plot, but had also demonstrated her bias by claiming all through the early 1980s that the CIA and other western intelligence agencies were holding back information on Soviet misdeeds in the interest of détente! (For a summary of the case and citations to Sterling's claims, see Herman and Brodhead, *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection* [New York: Sheridan Square Publications, 1986]).

After a lengthy investigation and trial, an Italian court dismissed the charges against the Bulgarians in 1986 for lack of evidence. The U.S. mass media, however, never acknowledged error or apologized for their gullibility and lack of investigative zeal. The dismissal of charges was explained away as based on "politics" or the overly demanding conditions of western jurisprudence.

Under the favorable conditions of late 1989 and early 1990, this convenient fabrication was brought back into service. The increased openness in Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, led the *Times* to editorialize on "Mysteries That Matter," including the mystery of "Who Tried to Kill the Pope?" (January 7, 1990, p. E24). "In 1982, the Pope narrowly avoided assassination at the hands of a Turkish terrorist who had worked with Bulgarian secret police. Was Mehmet Ali Agca recruited in Bulgaria to kill the Polish Pope? What larger purpose was the assassination meant to serve?"

• Note first the failure to mention that Agca was a rightist terrorist. The *Times* regularly refers to the FMLN and FSLN in Nicaragua and El Salvador as "Marxist," as this conveys a suitable negative image. Identifying Agca as rightist or fascist, however, might suggest doubts about his being an agent of the Soviet bloc and is omitted.

• Second, the assertion as fact that Agca had "worked with Bulgarian secret police" is based solely on Agca's claims and was never confirmed by independent evidence. It is therefore not a fact, but a highly dubious claim of a spectacular liar who also proclaimed himself to be Jesus.

• Third, the *Times's* questions about Bulgarian involvement and the larger purpose of the assassination attempt were answered in the trial. As the result did not satisfy the *Times's* bias, the questions are raised again at each opportunity to hint at the likelihood of another desired truth.

• Fourth, the *Times* failed from 1982 to 1986, and refuses now, to ask about other "mysteries," such as: was Agca bribed, coerced, and coached to implicate the Bulgarians? There was evidence earlier to support positive answers to these questions, but the *Times* chose then (and continues) not to address them.

Another event precipitating the revival was Gorbachev's visit to Rome and meeting with the Pope. Dan Rather on the CBS-TV Evening News of November 29, 1989, cited Agca's claim that the Soviets devised the plot and even reproduced Agca's image and words on being "specially trained by KGB." Rather acknowledged that such claims were "never proved in a court of law," but quickly added that "to the inner circle closest to the Pope and to those Catholics who know what it is like to live under communist rule, there was little doubt." That is, this is a higher truth like others believed in by the inner circle, to which the rules of evidence need not be applied.

Wide World Photos



Victor Sheymov at 1990 press conference, ten years after his defection and nine years after the shooting of the Pope.

Another basis for the revival of the Bulgarian Connection was a press conference on March 2, 1990, held in Washington by Victor I. Sheymov (formerly Orlov), a KGB defector who left the U.S.S.R. a decade ago, more than a year before the assassination attempt on the Pope. Sheymov produced no documents but claimed that he had seen a message from Soviet leader Yuri Andropov in 1979 requesting information on "how to get physically close" to the pontiff. According to Sheymov, this could only mean an interest in assassination, and he concluded that it was "absolutely clear" that the KGB was behind the plot. This conclusion is not persuasive. Furthermore, defectors are famous for concocting stories, and at the press conference Sheymov indicated he was seeking to publish a book about his experiences. Indeed, another defector, Arkady Shevchenko, successfully marketed his book based on nothing more than fairy tales about the Soviet Union. (See Edward Epstein, "The Spy That Came In To Be Sold," *New Republic*, July 15, 1986.)

Nonetheless, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* gave front page atten-

tion to Sheymov (Mark Thompson, "Ex-agent Says KGB Tried to Kill Pope in '81," March 3, 1990). The story in the *Times*, accompanied by a picture of Sheymov, reiterated once again that while the case against the Bulgarians was dismissed for lack of evidence, under Italian law this does not mean they were not really guilty (Michael Wines, "1980 Soviet Defector Emerges With Account of K.G.B. Plots," March 3, 1990, p. 6). CBS-TV news had a full minute coverage of this story on March 2, with CIA veteran Paul Henze as the expert witness. Henze simply postulated that the KGB-Bulgarian Connection was valid, as he had throughout the years 1981 to 1986, and "guessed," without offering any evidence, that Gorbachev had apologized to the Pope for the Soviet plot to kill him!

The stale and dubious claims by Sheymov, lacking documentary support, are newsworthy now, just as similar claims were at the height of the mainstream media's focus on the Bulgarian Connection. As with the recent spate of selected and artificial stories regarding Cuba or claims about Libya, stories featuring Red Evil require neither credibility nor a news peg — they fly on the air currents of anticommunist ideology and the news value of bogeymen. ●

## Moonshine

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**Sara Diamond and Richard Hatch**

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**T**he political activities and alliances of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church get short shrift in *New York Times* reporting, but the positions of the International Security Council, a think tank of Moon-linked militarists, get prominent space regularly on the *Times's* Op-Ed page.

Every year the Moon organization's World Media Association holds a high-level, all-expenses-paid conference for anticommunist media and political elites in some auspicious location. For the first time ever, the April 1990 conference took place in Moscow (co-sponsored by AULA, the Association for the Unification of Latin America, Moon's outreach program to Vatican and Latin American leaders). Rev. Moon himself met privately with Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

That fact alone ought to have merited more than the four-inch item in the gossipy "Chronicle" section of the *Times* (April 19, 1990, p. B24). The four short paragraphs merely reported that Gorbachev met with "the Korean religious leader" and that conference participants included former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, former Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, and *USA Today* founder Allen H. Neuharth.

The *Times* made no attempt to assess the Moon organization's timely choice of Moscow as its venue, let alone the nature of the meeting between Moon and Gorbachev.

The most likely possibility is that Soviet interest in Moon — and vice versa — is sparked by the tremendous political and economic clout he represents. A major element of the Moon

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apparatus is the Global Economic Action Institute, a network of leading corporate executives, many from Japan. GEAI corporate members have included: Amoco, Fuji Bank and Trust, McGraw-Hill, Nestlé, Toyota, TRW, and Upjohn.

*Times* readers have no context in which to cope with the Moon-Gorbachev meeting in any kind of in-depth article. The implications of the meeting might provoke consensus-disturbing questions about the new harmony between the Soviets and the Free World: Why would our new friend President Gorbachev host the likes of Rev. Moon, consistently portrayed as a sinister cultist out to capture the minds of American youth?

### The International Security Council

The answer has less to do with the Unification Church *per se* and more with the role of the Moon organization's myriad front groups, outreach, and media projects, which are integral parts of both the corporate and religious Right. Aside from GEAI, the newspapers, media conferences, and mass-based domestic front called the American Freedom Coalition, the most important tentacle of the Moon organization is CAUSA and its spin-off think tank, the International Security Council. The ISC publishes its own journal, *Global Affairs*, and coordinates conferences for some of the most hard-line military and intelligence figures in the U.S., Asia, and Latin America.

ISC head Joseph Churba, a stalwart supporter of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians, is a prominent expert on "terrorism" as defined by U.S. intelligence agencies and assets. About every other week, the ISC purchases a quarter page of the *New York Times's* Op-Ed section. The ad-editorials reflect the prerogatives of the ISC's military constituency and of the Moon organization's larger political-economic commitments:

"Germany in NATO: Building on Success" (May 23, 1990, p. A29), argued that the Soviets have no legitimate security interests in Europe and, therefore, should have no part in discussions over German reunification.

"Assertive Disarmament" (May 16, 1990, p. A27), claimed that international efforts to limit proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons have been effective. The ISC, therefore, urged the U.S. and its allies — namely Israel — not to rule out preemptive military assault on "irresponsible, aggressive states" possessing such weapons. As likely targets for such "assertive disarmament," ISC named Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, North and South Yemen, and Egypt.

The ISC ad-eds provide no description of the think tank's directors or sponsors. All that is listed are the address and phone number. No more is required to purchase space.

The cost of the ad-eds is \$13,590 on weekdays and \$13,960 on Sundays, according to *Times* display ad representative Brian Leary. The same space is often filled by Exxon and Mobil, which have millions of dollars to spend on public relations. There is no telling where the ISC gets \$27,000 per month to promote its cause.

According to Leary, the *Times's* only criteria for ad-ed space are that the message not be of a commercial nature and that it not be "blatantly untruthful" or "offensive." "We do not specifically exclude any organization," says Leary. "We ask: Is the content of the ad of a type that we feel belongs in the Op-Ed environment?" ●

## Letter From Lexington

June 9, 1990

Dear *LOOT*,

The founder of modern Costa Rican democracy, José Figueres Ferrer, died on June 8 at age 83. His death provided a perfect opportunity for reflection on major themes and events of the past decade and their significance. But to do so honestly would have meant a radical break with cultural and ideological convention. The actual media reaction fits the regular practice: to skirt uncomfortable issues that might provide too much understanding of social reality, and to treat people as means, not ends, inverting the moral principles that are granted ritual obeisance while consigned to the ashcan in practice.

For the past years, a dominant media theme has been that the traditional benevolence and humanity of U.S. foreign policy is now shaped by a passionate commitment to democracy, which awakened magically on June 19, 1979, as the Sandinistas overthrew the long-time U.S. favorite, Somoza. Indeed, "the yearning to see American-style democracy duplicated throughout the world has been a persistent theme in American foreign policy," *New York Times* diplomatic correspondent Neil Lewis instructed his audience (December 6, 1987, p. E2).

### Figueres condemned "Washington's incredible policies of persecuting the Sandinistas."

Since Central America was the main beneficiary of this yearning, one might expect that the leading figure of Central American democracy, who was quite outspoken about what was happening, would have achieved a certain prominence in the media. This expectation would only be heightened by a look at his record of support for U.S. state and corporate interests. But though superficially plausible, this reasoning fails to recognize the guiding criterion: serviceability to elite ends. Figueres was simply saying the wrong things, straying well beyond the narrow hawk-dove consensus. Accordingly, while occasional mention of "the father of Costa Rican democracy" was permissible in the course of an anti-Sandinista diatribe (James LeMoyné, *New York Times Magazine*, January 10, 1988, p. 68), those were the limits. Figueres had to be virtually censored out of the Free Press.

The *New York Times* carried a lengthy obituary of Figueres by veteran correspondent Eric Pace (June 9, 1990, p. 29). The headline read: "Led Costa Ricans to Democracy." The sub-heading described him as "A reformer with a distaste for dictators," referring to his opposition to Trujillo, Somoza, and others like them in the 1950s. An effusive editorial June 17 (p. E20) lauded this "fighter for democracy," so forthright that "nobody was in doubt about" his views, such as his bitter opposition to Somoza. More timely indications of his tastes and distastes are entirely omitted.



President of Costa Rica, Jose Figueres Ferrer, in 1973.

In interviews in 1986, Figueres described himself as "pro-Sandinista" and "quite friendly toward the Sandinistas," not because he approved of their particular policies (which were, he said, not his preference), but because "for the first time, Nicaragua has a government that cares for its people." (The quotations in this and the next paragraph are from interviews with Figueres by Andrew Redding in *World Policy Review*, Spring 1986, and by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in *Washington Report on the Hemisphere*, October 1, 1986.) An observer of the 1984 elections, Figueres joined the consensus that was near-universal outside the Washington-media alliance, regarding the elections as free and representative of popular opinion. Returning to Nicaragua two years later, he found "a surprising amount of support for the government" in this "invaded country," adding that the United States should allow the Sandinistas "to finish what they started in peace; they deserve it." He also breached decorum by observing that he "understands why" *La Prensa* was suspended after the virtual U.S. declaration of war against Nicaragua in 1986, having censored the press himself under far less threatening circumstances, when Costa Rica was under attack by Somoza.

Compounding his crimes, Figueres not only condemned "Washington's incredible policies of persecuting the Sandinistas" but went on to denounce its efforts "to undo Costa Rica's social institutions" and to "turn our whole economy over to the businesspeople, ... to the local oligarchy, or European companies." The United States is "turning most Central Americans into mercenaries" for its attack against Nicaragua, he observed.

He was also critical of the Costa Rican media, a virtual monopoly of the ultra-right.

Useless as a means, the man who “Led Costa Rica to Democracy” was converted to a nonperson as Central America became an obsession in the 1980s—now returning to its traditional oblivion as elite U.S. interests are considered secure.

It might be thought that, at least in an obituary, the truth could be revealed. The Associated Press did note that Figueres “railed against U.S. policy when the United States supported Nicaragua’s Contra guerrillas.” But even that gesture, it seems, was too much for the newspaper of record.

Figueres’s death offered broader opportunities for the media to provide some understanding of U.S. policies and what lies behind them. It is a commonplace that Costa Rica is an exception to the pattern of terror states that the U.S. has imposed and maintained, with a democratic system on the Western European model. The U.S. reaction has been ambivalent throughout. The record is instructive.

Figueres had his good points. Thus, he was so loyal to U.S. corporations that he was described by the State Department as “the best advertising agency that the United Fruit Company could find in Latin America.” (Citations for the quotations which follow may be found in my *Necessary Illusions* [Boston: South End Press, 1989], pp. 62-63, 111-13, 263-69.) Figueres was particularly impressed by the AFL-CIO bureaucrats who have compiled such a successful record in undermining the labor movement abroad while presiding over its decline at home. And he was generally a committed partisan of U.S. actions in Central America, working with the CIA, even lending qualified support to the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 to bar the constitutionally elected President, Juan Bosch. He supported the Bay of Pigs invasion, anticipating “a quick victory by the democratic forces which have gone into Cuba,” and later expressed his regrets for their “lamentable” defeat. He was concerned only that his enemy Trujillo be deposed first, after which the Dominican Republic could be used as a base against Castro. Pace quotes him as expressing opposition to the invasion, but omits the relevant background.

More crucially, Figueres adhered faithfully to the U.S. conception of “democracy” as unchallenged rule by business with the general population marginalized. He recognized early on that the Costa Rican Communist Party, particularly strong among plantation workers, was posing an unacceptable challenge. He therefore arrested its leaders, declared the party illegal, and repressed its members, a policy that was maintained through the 1960s, as efforts to establish any working class party were banned by the state authorities. He also explained the reasons with candor: It was a “sign of weakness. I admit it, when one is relatively weak before the force of the enemy, it is necessary to have the valor to recognize it.” These moves were accepted in the West as consistent with the liberal concept of democracy, and indeed, were virtually a precondition for U.S. toleration of “the Costa Rican exception.”

In general, Figueres aligned himself unequivocally with the United States. His government provided a favorable climate for

foreign investment, suppressed labor and political dissidence, and guaranteed the domestic predominance of business interests.

Still, the U.S. remained dissatisfied. The fact that the Constitution outlawed the Communist Party and that labor was generally repressed was insufficient. Eisenhower’s ambassador Robert Woodward warned that “the commies” had not been completely rooted out of “the laboring class,” and there had been “no move to stamp out the movement completely.” Furthermore, Costa Rica remained committed to free expression and to legal rights that made it difficult to arrest Communists and suppress their publications, as a solid commitment to democracy would require. The State Department was critical of the respect for civil liberties, the “lackadaisical ... attitude of the government toward [the] suppression” of communists, and the

### **Figueres aligned himself unequivocally with the United States.... Still the U.S. remained dissatisfied.**

failure of the media to rely sufficiently on U.S. sources. The Kennedy administration, too, was troubled by the excessive liberalism of Latin American countries and their failure to trim democratic forms to the overriding needs of

domestic and foreign business interests.

During the 1980s, with the lash of the debt to insure obedience, and with the cooperation of pro-business leaders such as Oscar Arias, the U.S. dedicated itself to unraveling the social welfare programs, rebuilding the army (under a different name), and in general restoring Costa Rica to the favored “Central American mode.” In Figueres’s unreportable words, the U.S. is attempting “to undo Costa Rica’s social institutions, to turn our whole economy over to the businesspeople, and to do away with our social insurance, our nationalized bank, our nationalized electric utility—the few companies we have that are too large to be in private hands. The United States is trying to force us to sell them to so-called private enterprise, which means turning them over to the local oligarchy or to U.S. or European companies.”

The death of Figueres offers other opportunities for timely reflection. The “Costa Rican exception” was based on state-led economic development with social expenditures to benefit much of the population; that is to say, it radically violated the prescriptions that the U.S. and the international institutions it dominates seek to impose on “developing countries,” as well as the U.S. itself. The doctrines advocated for—and when possible imposed upon—the Third World are not based on evidence that they will benefit the affected populations, though they do admirably serve the needs of local elites and foreign corporations, a fact that might elicit some thought. (See my *Necessary Illusions* [Boston: South End Press, 1989]; also Anthony Winson, *Coffee and Democracy in Modern Costa Rica* [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989].)

José Figueres’s career and the U.S. reaction to him have much to teach about Central America and about the fabled “yearning for democracy” that so inspires U.S. elites. Better, then, to suppress it in favor of a more serviceable story, all the way to the grave.

Noam

## Photo Opportunities

### Black Holes

"I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.... When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me."

—Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

The AP photograph on this page was published in the *New York Times* for May 5, 1990. The caption read, "Students at Kent State University in Ohio held a silent protest yesterday and dedicated a monument in memory of the four students killed and nine wounded 20 years ago by Ohio National Guardsmen." The accompanying story headline read, "Kent State: In Memory of the 4 Who Died." But the students' banner in the photograph clearly displays the words, "Long Live the Spirit of Kent and Jackson State." So what happened to Jackson State?

Under the AP photograph the *Times* ran a Reuters dispatch which called the killing of four students and injuring of nine others at Kent "a landmark event in American history." The story did not once mention Jackson State, where two people were murdered and 12 wounded. On the night of May 14, 1970, the Mississippi Highway Patrol attacked demonstrators who were outside the women's dormitory, Alexander Hall, protest-

ing against the increasing war and racism. During the 30-second assault, which occurred just after midnight, the police fired some 460 shots at the students.

The keynote speaker at the recent commemoration ceremony, George McGovern, referred to Jackson State in his speech, saying, "The shootings at Kent State and the shootings at Jackson State did give a new and passionate effort to attempts to stop the war." This was reported in a UPI dispatch of May 5, but absent from the Reuters story in the *Times*. Also omitted was McGovern's charge that the Bush administration prolongs the Vietnam experience by not establishing economic relations with Hanoi (*Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1990).

There were other stories with scant or no mention of Jackson State. In the *Los Angeles Times*, Bob Sexter ignored it entirely. Apart from quoting McGovern's reference, UPI's Rich Exner also maintained discretion about Jackson State. *The Nation*, which made only passing reference to the anniversary in a cover editorial, also chose to recall the four killed at Kent State rather than those at Jackson.

ABC-TV's *Nightline* took the opportunity of the anniversary to launch an attack against the 1960s, in a program titled "Twenty Years After Kent State." Jeff Greenfield described the Jackson State incident thus: "College students squared off against law enforcement officials, and when the shooting stopped, two college kids were dead." Greenfield went on to observe, "Rage was the spur 20 years ago. Rage at the protesters led President Nixon to authorize covert attempts to stop them, to the 'plumbers,' who begat Watergate, which drove a sitting president from office. And rage drove some of the most passionate protesters to words and to deeds that broke every link to the process of democracy. And so many look back on the time of the fever with regret, even with contempt, and yet for some of those who lived it, the time of the fever is still compelling."

The *Washington Post* did run a story on May 4 from Jackson,

Mississippi, titled "Jackson State Remembers; 1970 Killings Overshadowed by Kent State," which began, "The struggle here this week was against a double injustice: the killing of two young men on the campus of Jackson State University 20 years ago this month and the fact that so few remember how or why they died." A woman, crowned as Miss Jackson State in 1971, who witnessed the shootings, said, "They [Kent] got the publicity because they were white kids at a predominantly white institution. We didn't get the publicity because the two kids were black and were killed at a predominantly black institution." Although the



*Post* writer, E.J. Dionne, Jr., quotes those who point to racism as the cause for forgetting Jackson State, the reporter comments, "The incident blazed across front pages and evening news shows briefly. But because it happened at night, the incident was not recorded in the sort of dramatic photography that helped to make Kent State so famous. It soon was lost in popular memory." The media had no trouble installing Tiananmen Square, where violence also took place at night, in the popular memory. But Jackson State was lost in the black invisibility of night.

Back on May 5 of 1970, the Kent State killing was the main story on the front page of the *New York Times*, accompanied by two large photos, one of a young woman screaming over a dead body, the other of the Ohio National Guard marching ominously across the campus. Nixon was quoted as saying, "This should remind us all once again that when dissent turns to violence it incites tragedy."

For May 15, the day after the Jackson State killings, the *Times* placed the story at the bottom left corner of the front page, with the headline "Jackson Police Fire On Students." More prominence was given to at least eight other stories, including the latest business indices and news of the rejection of a Soviet proposal that Ford trucks be built in Russia.

Squashed into the bottom right corner of that day's paper was a follow-up on the killing the previous Monday, May 11, in Augusta, Georgia, of six blacks, who, according to police, "were shot as roving bands of Negroes looted stores." The follow-up reported that the relevant county commission had overruled the coroner's decision not to conduct a postmortem because of the cost. "We work on a budget system," the *Times* quoted the 74-year-old coroner as saying. "An autopsy costs \$100 and, besides, we've already had two this week." The commission overruled him partly because his preliminary report stated that the victims had been shot in the back.

As George Katsiaficas points out in an article, "Remembering Kent and Jackson State" (*Z Magazine*, May 1990), it is not just Jackson State that has been eclipsed over the years, but "the people's history of the 1960s."

Who remembers the names of those murdered at Jackson State — James Earl Green and Philip Gibbs — or at Kent State — Allison Krause, Jeff Miller, Sandra Scheyer, and William Schroeder. "How many of us," Katsiaficas asks, "have ever heard of George Winne, a student at the University of California, San Diego, who died of self-immolation on May 11, 1970, to protest the war?"

Reviewing the record, Katsiaficas writes: "Kent and Jackson State killings precipitated the largest strike in the history of the United States, a national uprising of millions of people on the nation's campuses which paralyzed the system of higher education, traumatized the country and indicated the beginning of the end for another American president. Across the country, more than 35,000 National Guard were called out in 16 states to bloodily suppress the protests. From Kent and Jackson to Buffalo and Albuquerque, more than 100 people were killed or wounded in the ensuing violence. Among the casualties were two dead and 12 wounded at Jackson State on May 14, eleven students bayoneted at the University of New Mexico, 20 shotgun wounds at the University of Ohio, and 12 in Buffalo." ●

# Déjà Vu All Over Again?

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William Worthy

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"...I started saying in January 1959 that the coverage of the Cuban Revolution was the worst example of American journalism that I had seen in my long career."

— Veteran *New York Times* correspondent  
Herbert L. Matthews.

"Occasionally we have withheld stories for a time in the national interest. When the President of the United States calls you in and says this is a matter of vital security, you accept the injunction."

— Associated Press general manager Alan J. Gould, upon his retirement, in *Editor and Publisher*, February 2, 1963.

"It was déjà vu all over again."

— Yogi Berra.

**L**ogically, ever since the U.S. defeat at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, and after the embarrassing revelations of almost Vichy-type media collaboration in suppressing military build-up news, Americans might expect front-page treatment of any developments smacking of a replay.

Such, alas, is not the case. This spring, as reported in detail by *Prensa Latina*, Cuba's global wire service, highly provocative triple U.S. war games off Guantanamo Bay — including a practice air strike against Cuba's westernmost provinces by B-52 bombers — came and went, virtually ignored by the U.S. press.

Among the massive U.S. military units that participated in the air, land, and sea exercises — named Global Shield, Ocean Venture, and Defex — were the 101st Air Assault Division, a mechanized infantry division, and the 82nd Airborne Division.

Collectively they comprised hundreds of warplanes and many warships, such as the BB-64 Battleship Wisconsin. As if to underscore a prospective or planned outbreak of major hostilities on Cuban soil, the war games included a dry-run evacuation of civilians from the Guantanamo naval base.

## Refreshing Our Memories

If General Edward G. Lansdale, the CIA's legendary psychological operations expert, was correct in saying that "history tells us there will surely be a next time," then it is prudent to refresh our memories of how the *New York Times*, et al., played footsie with Washington for a full half year prior to the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

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In 1964, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed William Worthy's McCarran Act conviction, establishing Americans' constitutional right to return home from Cuba or anywhere else "without bearing a valid passport." Folksinger Phil Ochs composed "The Ballad of William Worthy" on that right-to-travel case.



Cuban troops shortly after their successful defense against the Bay of Pigs invasion.

On October 9, 1960, I lunched in Havana with Humberto Arenal of Television Revolución, a government station. Very calmly, he remarked: "We know that the CIA is arranging an invasion of our country. We don't know when it will come, but we are prepared for it." That day I cabled my paper, the *Baltimore Afro-American*, with the very first story to be published in the U.S. on the secret invasion plans.

Several days later in New York, having participated in a team filming assignment on the Time, Inc./ABC documentary, "Yan-ki, No!" I was given very brief and quickly canceled access to voluminous *Time* magazine files of unpublished dispatches from Mexico, Miami, Guatemala, Somoza's Nicaragua, and elsewhere in the Caribbean. All told of the war preparations by the CIA and Cuban exiles at secret training sites.

On October 30, 1960, an article about the clandestine activities appeared in *La Hora*, a Guatemalan newspaper. On November 19, 1960, a well-informed editorial in *The Nation* labeled the upcoming invasion a "dangerous and hare-brained project" and called on all U.S. news media to pursue the story. The *Nation* editors sent copies of the editorial, together with a news release, to AP, UPI, the *New York Times* (four separate copies), and other media. There were follow-up telephone calls. Result: zero.

Finally, on January 10, 1961, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *Los Angeles Times* confirmed that the U.S. had built a heavily guarded, million-dollar airstrip in the Guatemala jungle. The *New York Times* ran a front-page story on the base the same day—but with no mention of CIA involvement. Two weeks later, in its January 27 issue, *Time* finally published what it had suppressed for months: namely that Mr. B., a CIA agent, was in charge of the jungle base. (For a full discussion of these media developments, and of the *Times*-White House relationship discussed below, see Warren Hinckle and William Turner, *The Fish Is Red: The Story of the Secret War Against Castro* [New York: Harper & Row, 1981], and Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979].)

With Vice-President Nixon leading the charge in the outgoing Eisenhower administration, it was precisely during that period of media self-censorship that the momentum for the invasion became unstoppable, as Senator J. William Fulbright and the few protesting Kennedy appointees such as Chester Bowles and Edward R. Murrow soon learned.

## The Sorriest Media Performance

The sorriest part of the media performance came during the final build-up to the April 17 invasion. The guiltiest parties: *New York Times* publisher Orvil L. Dryfoos, managing editor Turner Catledge, and, to a lesser extent, Washington correspondent James Reston. On vacation in Miami, Tad Szulc, the paper's Latin America correspondent, had stumbled onto the specifics of what was afoot. Before his story made it into print, however, Dryfoos was in telephone contact with President Kennedy—and was pressured either to kill or at least play down the story on national security grounds.

Catledge overruled the news editor's decision for a front-page four-column headline which would have alerted the world to the imminence of the war that was just ten days away. Catledge also cut out all specific references to the CIA and to the urgency of the fast-moving developments. As published (April 7, 1961, p. A1), the bland and substantively misleading headline read: "Anti-Castro Units Trained to Fight at Florida Bases." In paragraph ten, the CIA trainers/planners/organizers/commanders of the huge enterprise had been transformed, on Catledge's orders, into "United States experts."

Ironically, two weeks after the Bay of Pigs, a chastened Jack Kennedy told Catledge: "Maybe if you had printed more about the operation you would have saved us from a colossal mistake." To Dryfoos he said more than a year later: "I wish you had run everything on Cuba."

## Disinformation

On days one, two, and three of the four-day Bay of Pigs operation, Americans and the world were told that Fidel and Raúl Castro had either fled Cuba or succumbed to nervous breakdowns; they were told about the glorious victories of the motley invading force of exiles, mercenaries, Batistianos, and "soldiers" of the Meyer Lansky Mafia family which had controlled all the rackets in Batista's Cuba; and they were regaled with news of great popular uprisings as the liberators neared Havana.

Afterwards it was learned that all these dispatches with different fraudulent Caribbean datelines had been cranked out in New York by a CIA-retained public relations firm. They had moved on AP and UPI wires with absolutely no verification of authenticity. The *Toronto Daily Star* (May 13, 1961, p. 7) mocked both wire services in a full page headed "Does the U.S. Press Slant the News?" It reprinted from a Cuban paper a satirical montage of the propaganda binge entitled "The Little Total War of AP and UPI." In London, the *New Statesman* pointed out that "the American press ... has whipped itself into a state of hysteria about the Castro regime" (April 28, 1961, p. 649).

At present, perhaps Cuba's greatest risk is a variation of the 1961 U.S. plan to stage a provocation—a supposed offshore strike by Castro at Guantanamo naval base—as a pretext for a U.S. invasion. It fizzled because the mercenary crew, dressed in phony Cuban uniforms, chickened out upon realizing that they probably would be killed when the base returned their fire.

A month after the Bay of Pigs, in his syndicated Washington column, Walter Lippmann referred to "our moral and intellectual unpreparedness for the reality of things." Will our great news-gathering organizations again be complicit in lethal distortions of the truth? ●



# The Earth First! Bombing

Laura Fraser

**M**ay 24, 1990, Oakland, California: A car bomb exploded, injuring Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney, two leading members of the environmentalist group Earth First!. The press was astonishingly quick to assume—without any proof, and indeed with indications to the contrary—that they were guilty of knowing possession of the bomb which had nearly killed them.

Articles the ensuing days in the *New York Times* and the San Francisco papers focused on the Oakland Police Department's assertion that the two were transporting the bomb in their car when it accidentally went off. Bari and Cherney were limited to short disavowals, without the history or context which might have cast doubt on the police's rather incredible story.

## The "Quick To" Business

In the *Times* article on May 26 ("Environmentalists Hurt, Then Held, in Blast," p. A1), the denials of the Earth First!ers were not only given little space, they were considered somewhat rash. In the lead paragraph, the writer, Katherine Bishop, called the Earth First! supporters "quick to blame" their opponents; later they were described as "quick to denounce the charge as ridiculous." This "quick to" business makes it sound as if the supporters either had a ready alibi or were too wildly radical to think something through rationally. The police, on the other hand—although they certainly were quick to charge the victims—sounded perfectly reasonable. The "authorities believed," said the *Times* (they were not "quick to believe"), that the bomb had been placed in the car by its occupants.

The story did not ask why the police believed this, nor did it ponder the oddity of carrying a live bomb in the back seat of one's car from one meeting to another. The *San Francisco Chronicle* (Michael Taylor and Sharon McCormick, "Oakland Police Arrest the Victims in Car Explosion," May 26, 1990, p. A1) noted that police believed they knew of the bomb because of its "location" in the car; the *Chronicle* reporters interpreted this to mean "that the bomb was in plain view," but it turned out that the bomb was in the back seat underneath a guitar case. Maybe police know what is in the backs of their cars at all times; it did not occur to the reporters that others might not. [The decision whether formally to charge the two was to have been made by June 22. Despite the "beliefs" of the police, authorities asked for, and received, an extension of time in which to decide. As *LOOT* goes to press it is still unclear whether Bari or Cherney will be charged with anything.]

## Isolating Earth First!

In the *Times*, before giving space to Earth First!'s back-

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Laura Fraser is a freelance journalist and the media critic for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

ground, the story described how "other environmental groups have sought to distance themselves from Earth First!." It said the Sierra Club (the only "other group" mentioned) had opposed the planned "Redwood Summer" protests against logging ancient trees, "fearing that they might result in violence." The Redwood Summer organizers' written vows to have a peaceful protest and Bari and Cherney's own personal espousals of pacifism were not mentioned. Environmental groups that support Earth First!—and there are many—were not mentioned until much later in the article.

Next, the *Times* linked Earth First! with other instances of violence in campaigns against the timber industry, including one in 1987 when a millworker was injured from sawing a spiked tree (one in which a metal rod has been driven), and another where a pipe bomb was discovered at a lumber company in Northern California. In neither of these cases, however, has there been any proof that Earth First! was involved. "Any example of environmental sabotage that's happened over the last five years immediately gets tacked on to any story about Earth First!," says Mike Roselle, one of the group's founders, who says it was not connected to either of these incidents.

There is no front-page mention in the *Times* of violence against Bari, Cherney, and their associates. On the continuation page (p. A10), Bishop eventually says that Bari "had recently received threats by telephone and in unsigned notes," and one note is described. But the article fails to point out that there were dozens of threats, that a car in which Bari, Cherney, and a number of small children were riding was struck from behind by a logging truck on August 18 under highly suspicious circumstances, and that other acts of violence had been perpetrated against the environmentalists (see B. Anderson, "Judi Bari: 'This Man Tried to Kill Us,'" *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, March 21, 1990, p. 1).

## FBI Disruption

The FBI (which began an immediate investigation of the bombing) has been involved in many attempts to disrupt activist groups, and Earth First! is no exception, although this was not reported in the *Times*. The FBI—which has waged campaigns against the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement, Students for a Democratic Society, CISPES, and other activist groups—recently infiltrated Earth First! in a yearlong, \$2 million undercover operation, resulting in the arrest of Earth First! founder Dave Foreman on charges of conspiring to disable some water pumps in Arizona. The *Times* mentioned Foreman's arrest, quoting the FBI saying the attempt was a "trial run" for the destruction of other power plants. Roselle says the incident was incited by an FBI agent, but the *Times* did not quote him. A recent *San Francisco Examiner* story (Jane Kay, "Green 'Mafia' New Target of Political Suspicion," June 10, 1990, p. 1) reported that the FBI accidentally left on its own bugging equipment during the incident, taping an undercover agent saying it would not be enough to arrest him, and discussing a plan to "pop" Foreman "to send a message."

Clearly, the FBI's message has come in loud and clear to the news media. Radical activists are guilty until proven innocent, and perhaps even after. As Roselle says, "We were convicted in the media before we had a chance to see the evidence." ●

### Mandela's Judas

The *New York Times* has taken the Intelligence Identities Protection Act too far. It is now omitting, and thereby protecting, the names of deceased CIA operatives; even the Freedom of Information/Privacy Act designates that a person has relinquished his or her threshold of privacy once they are dead. Fortunately, some of us have daily newspapers that publish what they believe the public has a right to know.

A case in point is the *Times* article on Sunday, June 10, 1990, "CIA Tie Reported in Mandela Arrest," by David Johnson, based upon a Cox News Service report. Johnson's account said, "The report, scheduled for publication on Sunday, quoted an unidentified retired official who said that a senior CIA officer told him shortly after Mr. Mandela's arrest: 'We have turned Mandela over to the South African security branch. We gave them every detail, what he would be wearing, the time of day, just where he would be.'"

The AP dispatch on the same story, as published in the *New Haven Register* on June 11, 1990, said, "The report quoted an unidentified former U.S. official as saying that Paul Eckel, then a senior CIA operative, had told him within hours of Mandela's arrest that the capture was 'one of our greatest coups.' The former official said Eckel told him: 'We have turned Mandela over to the South African security branch. We gave them every detail, what he would be wearing, the time of day, just where he would be. They have picked him up.' Eckel, who retired about 10 years ago, died in 1986." (According to *Who's Who*, Paul Edward Eckel, born June 8, 1908, at Haverhill, Massachusetts, was First Secretary at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria from 1957 to 1962. In fact, this was his CIA cover.)

Perhaps the *Times* should change its motto to "Some Of The News We Care To Print." Leaving it as it is may be false advertising.

— Peggy Adler Robohm

### Timing Is Everything

In fact, there was another interesting aspect to the Cox News Service "revelations." In fact, the information had been publicized nearly four years earlier, in articles and broadcasts which not only described the CIA's involvement but also named the CIA undercover agent who betrayed Mandela, Donald C. Rickard.

The item appeared in South African and British papers, and was broadcast on the CBS-TV nightly news August 5, 1986. Correspondent Allen Pizzey interviewed Paris-based journalist James Tomlins, who was in South Africa in 1962, and who said that Rickard told him about his betrayal at the time. In 1986, as it happens, the *New York Times* did not mention the CBS broadcast, and in some quarters that means it did not occur.

— William H. Schaap

### Mixed-Up Welcome

On June 20, Nelson Mandela and his wife Winnie arrived in New York to begin their historic tour of the United States. As hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, led by Mayor David N. Dinkins, opened their hearts to the visitors, the *New York Times* chose to play master of the mixed message. While the other New York dailies greeted the South African hero's arrival with banner headlines and front-page photographs, and local radio and TV stations and CNN provided live coverage of the day's events, the *Times* chose a different approach — one unsettling in its inconsistency and implications.

At the top center of the front page was a large photo, also of a well-known black leader — Washington's Mayor Marion S. Barry, Jr., along with downcast wife Effie, arriving at court for his drug trial.

Below the centerfold (out of sight for newsstand display), and without a photo, began an article by Christopher S. Wren entitled, "Mandela the Messenger, Celebrated, Yet Life-Size." This qualified praise set the tone for the continuing coverage on page A16.

There, an article by John Kifner largely devoted to the official agenda and security measures employed to protect Mandela, included the following highlighted phrase (which was not in the story): "The former inmate will be hailed as a hero amid heavy security" (emphasis added). Thus the *Times* picked up the theme of black as felon which graced its front page. To refer to a political prisoner of Mandela's stature, incarcerated 27 years for his beliefs and the color of his skin, as a "former inmate," was insensitive at best and a calculated insult at worst. When has the *Times* referred to a survivor of a Nazi concentration camp as a "former inmate"?

The front-page story, although acknowledging Mandela's stature, lack of "personal animosity," and stamina, took on a begrudging tone as it dredged up reservations about Mandela and the ANC.

The article quoted F.W. de Klerk's criticism of Mandela for "espousing a continuation of the guerrilla struggle." Wren raised the twin menaces of nationalization and land redistribution on the one hand, while suggesting, on the other, that Mandela may have softened his position on these issues. He also implied that Mandela's role was to act as figurehead for an ANC strategy to project itself as more moderate than it really is. Wren questioned Mandela's sincerity, referring to ANC sympathy for the PLO, Castro, and Qaddafi, all geared to conjure up suspicion in his readers.

Finally, Wren's article cast doubts about Mandela's ability to lead — "Mr. Mandela can still draw tens of thousands of supporters to a rally, but they may not do what he urges" — and concluded by questioning his reluctance to reveal his political ambitions. Wren had not, of course, seen Mandela adroitly debate *Nightline* host Ted Koppel on the issues, as he did the next evening.

One must wonder what the *Times* has really chosen to say, and why such qualified praise has been allotted to such a monumental figure.

— Nancy Watt Rosenfeld

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# If They Win, It's Not Free

Ellen Ray

The *New York Times* coverage of the June elections in Bulgaria went from optimism for an anticommunist victory to sour grapes, with serious distortions of history throughout. The first page-one pre-election report (Celestine Bohlen, "For Communists in Bulgaria, A Ballot With No Guarantees," June 9, 1990) referred to the upcoming contest between the Bulgarian Socialist Party and the opposition Union of Democratic Forces as a "face-off between the Communists and the non-Communists." The election was "a fitting punctuation mark to the process that has swept away old-style authoritarian systems" in the rest of Eastern Europe.

But in the first round of balloting, when the Socialists took a wide lead over the UDF (Bohlen, "Ex-Communists Decisively Lead Bulgaria Voting," June 11, p. A1), excuses appeared. Bulgarians were unable "to break old habits"; the opposition "was handicapped because its candidates were less well known." An accompanying caption referred to "the country's first free vote in nearly six decades."

Although she conceded that the elections "took place in an atmosphere of order and calm," the next day's fare was again devoted to apologetics (Bohlen, "Bulgarian Voting Stuns Opposition," June 12, p. A12). "The opposition accused the Socialist Party of resorting to fraud and intimidation," but "stopped short of calls to invalidate the vote." One sentence noted the British observers' finding of fairness, but the next several paragraphs described the bizarre findings of observers led by the National Democratic and Republican Institutes from the U.S. (financed by the National Endowment for Democracy). They found "evidence of the legacy of dictatorship—'psychological and sociological' pressures 'not visible to

the naked eye.'"

A brief AP dispatch run on June 14 ("Bulgarians Stage Election Protest," p. A16) also said it was "Bulgaria's first free elections in 58 years." A slight change appeared several days later in articles by Chuck Sudetic. He referred, on June 16 (p. 4), to Bulgaria's "first multiparty parliamentary elections in more than four decades," and on June 19 (p. A12), to "the first free multiparty elections here in more than 45 years."

What is this all about? We learned the answer while searching the Associated Press archives for photographs of Bulgaria, where we found the photo reproduced here and several others. Some showed voting for representatives to the People's Councils, May 15, 1949. More than 90 percent of the four million voters supported candidates of the anti-fascist Fatherland Front coalition government, led by Georgi Dimitrov and the Communist Party. As the AP caption to a photo of a voter casting his ballot noted, "the ballot boxes were opened in the presence of outsiders and pressmen were allowed to witness this event." The dancers shown below were on their way to vote in a referendum for or against the Fatherland Front, December 18, 1949; this

time, 97 percent of the four and a half million voters supported the government.

And these were not, in fact, the first free postwar elections in Bulgaria. Even before Hitler's fall, the U.S. State Department demanded immediate free elections in Bulgaria, where the Fatherland Front had governed since driving out the Nazis in 1944. The Allies agreed on elections in August, but in a procedure reminiscent of U.S. interference in the Nicaraguan elections, the U.S. ambassador met secretly with the opposi-

tion leader and, on realizing that the Fatherland Front was going to win handily, urged him to boycott the election. In October 1946, more than two million Bulgarians voted for the Communists, and some 1.2 million voted for their coalition partners, the Agrarian Party. While the U.S. denounced the election as unfair, the British Foreign Office—and most foreign correspondents—disagreed. (See Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* [New York: Penguin, 1985], p. 263.)

The Bulgarians, notwithstanding the *New York Times*, have had free elections. ●



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